Lat 39.54925 Lon -120.31754

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File Code: 3420 **Date:** February 25, 2000

Subject: Hazard trees in Cottonwood Campground (NE00-07)

To: District Ranger, Sierraville RD, Tahoe NF

On January 19, at the request of Rachel Condon, District Sale Administrator I examined approximately a dozen white fir trees in the Cottonwood Campground. Rachel had found conks on the trees and requested identification and assessment of the hazard presented by the trees. Mary Westmoreland from the Truckee RD accompanied Rachel and I for this review because Mary oversees the recreation in this campground.

The white fir I examined had been marked for removal by Rachel and Mary, and conks of several different fungi were found. The conks and the presence of many dead branches throughout the crowns of these trees indicate that extensive decay is present in the heartwood. The fungi that I identified were:

Indian paint fungus (*Echinodontium tinctorium*) which causes brown stringy rot in white fir;
Phellinus pini which causes red ring rot/white pocket rot in most conifers; and
Red belt fungus (*Fomitopsis pinicula*) which causes brown crumbly rot in most conifers.

The absence of conks on a conifer does not mean that a tree is free of extensive decay. A conk may have been dislodged from the tree by a variety of forces or a conk may be very small and obscure. Sometimes, for reasons not known, conks fail to grow on trees with extensive decay. Other indicators of advanced decay are swollen and punk knots (which can be very hard to see) and an unhealthy appearing crown. A tree with dead and dying branches throughout or grouped within the live crown, with poor needle retention or with fading needles may have decay in the bole or roots that could weaken the tree.

Large trees with extensive decay in the roots, bole or branches are hazardous if the trees are within striking distance of campsites, structures, parking spots or places where people frequent. In addition to looking for indicators of hidden decay in trees, managers must identify visible defects on trees which are hazardous. A tree is hazardous if it is weakened by a defect and all or a portion of that tree could strike a target of value (person or object) and cause damage, injury or death, in the event the defect failed while the target was present. Visible defects such as dead trees, leaning trees, dead tops, multiple tops or forks, and hanging branches are easy to locate and evaluate. All hazardous trees need to be treated by removing those trees or hazardous portions of those trees; or by removing the target from striking distance. All tree hazards should be treated in campgrounds before they are opened to visitors.

It is always a good idea to proactively manage the trees and other vegetation in recreation areas to maintain strong healthy trees and to encourage young tree establishment where needed. This is best done by developing and following long-range, site specific vegetation management plans for

recreation areas. Several copies of a guide for preparing these plans (as well as for identifying and managing tree hazards): "Long-Range Planning for Developed Sites in the Pacific Northwest: The Context of Hazard Tree Management," were left with Rachel and Mary. I am available to assist in developing vegetation management plans for recreation areas on your District. Please contact me at 252-6680 (voicemail) or wwoodruf/r5,lassen (IBM) if you have any questions or requests.

/S/ *Bill Woodruff*

WILLIAM C. WOODRUFF
Plant Pathologist, NE California FPM

cc: Rachel Condon
Mary Westmoreland